(b) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b)The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Floor rental of WLL phones

1618. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India for cancellation/reduction in floor rental of WLL phones;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that instead of Rs. 140, Rs. 540 is being charged as floor rental; and

(d) what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (d) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has reported that it received several representations for review of floor rental for handheld WLL phones. After the said review, TRAI has specified a monthly rental of Rs. 200/- for the same vide Telecommunication Tariff (22nd Amendment) Order dated 4th July 2002, which allows flexibility also to offer alternative packages in order to give benefits of technology and competition to subscribers in a deregulated environment.

VPTs by private operators

1619. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether private operators have shown any interest in providing telephones in remote areas of rural India;

(b) how many private operators are currently providing cellular services in Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether they have been asked to provide this service to rural people on concessional rates; and

(d) if not, what is the policy in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) Two private operators *viz.* M/s. Escotel Mobile Communications Ltd. and M/s. Bharti Cellular Ltd. are presently providing cellular services in the Service Area of Uttar Pradesh (West) and two private operators *viz.* M/s. Aircel Digilink India Ltd. and M/s. Koshika Telecom Pvt. Ltd. are presently providing cellular services in the Service Area of Uttar Pradesh (East). The roll out obligations stipulated in the licence of cellular operators do not provide for mandatory coverage of rural areas.

Investment by Switzerland in IT

1620. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS.AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are leading a high powered Indian delegation to Switzerland to attract investment in information technology; and

(b) if so, the details of the discussion held with the Swiss authorities and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) A high level official and business delegation went to Switzerland in June 2002 in connection with organisation of 'Destination India' event to create awareness about the good investment climate in the country and attracting foreign direct investment in various sectors of the economy including information technology sector.

(b) During the 'Destination India' event in Zurich, the presentations were made highlighting IT opportunities that India has to offer in the fields of IT outsourcing, opening of offshore development centres and the skills of IT professionals. It was also mentioned that grant of the visa should be on a priority basis for the IT workforce.